

# Alarm in French Alps after British tourists positive for COVID

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At least 14 members of a group of British tourists staying at a resort in the French Alps have tested positive for COVID-19, local officials said Friday, despite showing negative tests upon their arrival in the country.

Further tests are now being carried out to see if the tourists are infected with the faster-spreading mutation of the virus believed to have originated in England, which has caused concern across Europe.

The regional ARS health authority told AFP that all 26 members of the group had undergone tests and 14 were so far positive, with other results still to come in.

They have been in quarantine in their accommodation in the resort of Vallorcine, near the French Alpine hub of Chamonix, with police making sure their isolation is being respected.

No one has been hospitalised so far and the self-isolation rules are being respected, the local prefecture added. A substantial effort of contract-tracing is also underway to prevent the spread of the cluster.

So far just one to two percent of [coronavirus](#) cases in France are believed to have been caused by the fast-spreading variant, but officials fear it could drastically worsen the health situation.

A new lockdown "would probably become an absolute necessity" if the spread of this variant increased "significantly" in France, Health Minister Olivier Veran warned on Thursday.

The purpose of the group's visit was not immediately clear, According to France Bleu radio they are students.

Alpine skiing is almost impossible in France at the moment as ski lifts are shut to prevent the spread of the virus. But hotels are open and other winter activities such as snow-shoeing and cross-country skiing are still allowed.

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